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3. 4-107

Copies of Letters of
Levi Woodbury
R. M. Patterson &
Superintendent

[illegible] relating to the proposed investigation —

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Doc. A.

(Copy) Mint of the United States
May 23d. 1839.

Sir,

I received yesterday, from the Secretary of the Treasury, a letter of which the Copy is subjoined. It transmitted a Copy of your letter recommending the removal of Messs. Tyler and Maywell. Under the instructions of the Secretary I have written to the District Attorney at New-Orleans, to engage him in the investigation ordered to be made, and I beg that every facility may be afforded to him in Conducting this delicate and important business.

Very Respectfully Your faithful Servant
(Signed) R. M. Patterson
Director.

To. David Bradford.
Sup. Br. Mint. New-Orleans.

"Treasury Department May 20. 1839.

"Sir,

I transmit enclosed a Copy of a letter just received from the Superintendent of the Branch Mint at New-Orleans, to which I have to call your particular attention.

3. As further information seems to be required to enable the Department to come to a proper decision, I have to request, that you will write to employ the District Attorney at N. Orleans to enquire fully into the qualifications and efficiency of the present Officers of the establishment, and of those recommended to succeed the Melter & Refiner and Coiner in the event of their removal ——— and to report to you fully as to the Characters of the Officers implicated and the State of the Branch Mint generally &

its difficulties."

I remain very Respfy.

(Signed) Levi Woodbury — Secretary of Treasury

"Dr. R. M. Patterson

Director of the Mint — Philadelphia.

U. S. B. Mint New-Orleans

Superintendents Office June 1st 1839.

Sir,

I have just seen the District Attorney Thomas Slidell Esq. at his office at the Custom house and he requested me to Notify you that he would attend at this Office on Monday evening next at five O'clock P. M., to proceed in the investigation as ordered by the Secretary of the Treasury in his letter of the 20th May last to the Director of which herewith you have a Copy as also of the letter of the Director to me of the 23d of May last.

The District Attorney desired that you attend at the time and place aforesaid.

Very Respfy.

David Bradford — Supt.

The above is a Copy of a letter I addressed and had delivered to Messrs. Tyler & Maxwell, on its date.

David Bradford — Supt.

(Copy) Doc. B.

Mint of the United States May 7th 1839.

"Sir,

In a letter which I received yesterday from James Maxwell, Esq, the Melter & refiner of your Mint, he gives to

me a statement of an occurrence which has caused me much uneasiness. The letter of Mr. Maxwell is somewhat obscure but the case, as I understood it, may be presented as follows:

On the 16th. of April last two deposites were made at the Mint. One was of hammered Dollars & French crowns, and was melted for assay. The other was of Mexican dollars, (about two hundred in number,) which it is not customary to melt, for the purpose of Assay, as their quality is known from the Character of the coin. The deposite must, however, as a matter of regular course, have been weighed, Numbered, & recorded. In a few days after, when Mr. Maxwell was receiving bullion from the weigher, he found among the assayers Reports one of No 98, corresponding in weight, name, date, and kind of Coin, to the deposite in question. Mr. Maxwell told the weigher that he had never received this deposite, and the weigher asserted that he had. Now as the assayer declared that he had not reported on any deposite not melted, the inference was either that the Mexican Dollars had been melted for assay — which is not usual, and which was denied positively by the Melter, — or that that they had disappeared while in the keeping of the weigher, for it seems that they were not to be found.

An investigation was made, from which it appeared that leaves had been torn out of the book of original entry and the numbers altered, and it was subsequently found that in the statement sent, of the Deposite in question, to the assayer, it was numbered 100 instead of 98, and when returned the number 100 was changed, by the weigher, to 98. — This alteration of

books and documents shows a unpardonable Carelessness in the Weigher, but I cannot see how it could served him in any intention to commit a fraud.

The weigher still insisted that the coins had been melted for assay, yet, "he offered to make up the deficiency". The Superintendant agreed with the Weigher, yet offered to give Mr. Maxwell an official letter removing all censure from him. Dr. Hort subsequently, by assaying the bullion on hand, became convinced that the Mexican Dollars, had not been melted, (I suppose by not finding any bars of the Mexican standard.) It thus appears, so far as I can understand Mr. Maxwells statement, that about $200 worth of coins have disappeared, in the hands of a Clerk who has tampered with the books and documents entrusted to him.

Thus far the transaction presents to my view a very bad appearance, - but there comes, on the other side, the statement that the clerk of the weigh-room is sustained by you in his Course; from which I infer that there are circumstances in the case unexplained to me, and with regard to which I beg that you will promptly & fully present your views. I would ask particularly answers to the following questions:

1. By whom was the deposite of Mexican dollars made?
2. Was it weighed, and a receipt given for it?
3. Was the deposite duly recorded at the time, and does that record remain on the book as originally made? Was the number of the deposite 98? If so, What was Mr. 100?

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4. Is it customary with you to melt deposites of Mexican dollars for assay?

5. Does the Clerk still assert that these dollars were given to Mr. Maxwell, or to the man who melts deposites for assay? If so, does he state any circumstances attending their delivery by which the fact might be ascertained: such as the presence of other persons, &c.?

6. Did Dr. Hort, at the time, make any assay from bars of the Mexican standard, and which he could refer to the deposite in question?

7. Can any satisfactory reason be given for the removal of a leaf or leaves from the Weigh-book, and for the alteration of the number on the blanks, filled up for the Assayer, and returned by him?

8. At the time in question, were there any other Mexican dollars in the Treasurers Vault?

9. When your examination was made, on the occurrence of the difficulty, were there any Mexican dollars in the Treasurer's Vault, (I mean the Vault to which the Weigher has access,) which might have constituted or included the deposite in dispute?

10. What is the name of the Clerk of the Weigh-room? How long has he been in the Mint? What is the character which he bears?

I have felt it my duty to communicate to the Secretary of the Treasury the statement of Mr. Maxwell as I have given it to you, and have told him that I

would apply to you for a report on the subject. This will be looked for with great anxiety. The Mint must be kept beyond the reach of suspicion."

Very Respectfully your faithful Servant
(Signed) R. M. Patterson
Director."

To. David Bradford, Esq.
Supt. Br. Mint,
New-Orleans

(Copy) Doc. C.

Mint of the United States May 7, 1839.

Sir,

I have this moment received a letter from Mr. Maxwell, of the 27th ult., giving me further details with regard to the transactions connected with the deposite of Mexican dollars, of the 16th of April. I do not find in this communication, any thing bearing very particularly upon the investigation requested of you in my letter of the 7th Inst., unless it may be that some explanation is given us to the confusion among the numbers, and that it leaves me still in doubt whether the 200 Mexican Dollars were really missing from the Treasurer's Vault. There is, however, a circumstance stated in Mr. Maxwells letter which has excited my indignation, and to which I must pray your immediate attention. It is that a note of which a Copy is subjoined has been sent by Mr Dimitry, (the Clerk of the Weigh-room;) threatening a personal attack upon the Melter & refiner

If Mr. Maxwell thought he had reason to suspect any one attached to the Mint, it was his duty to make his suspicions known, and if the individual, thus suspected, has dared, while the matter was under Official investigation, to threaten a resort to brute force for the maintaining of his character, I am sure you will see the propriety of dismissing him instantly from your employment

Very respectfully Your faithful Servant.
Signed R. M. Patterson

To, David Bradford, Esq, Director."
Supt. Br. Mint. New-Orleans.

Copy of Mr. Dimitry's note to Mr. Maxwell, referred to above.

"To Jas. Maxwell, Sir, You have accused me of fraud— The cause of your enmity towards me, is the little regard I have paid to the numerous hints and suggestions on your part to subserve your vile purposes— Your conduct deserves chastisement— I shall try to administer it— Whenever & wherever I may meet, out of the precincts of the Mint, it is my firm determination to attack you. I warn you to be on your guard."

(Signed) "M. D. Dimitry"
"Mint of the U. States. May 16th 1839.

(Copy)
"Sir,

In a letter received this morning from Mr. Tyler, a case is stated which seems to me to require your particular attention. It exhibits the strongest circumstantial evidence that one of the Mint Men, still kept in employ-

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ment, has been guilty of purloining coins while engaged in Counting them. This is a very grievous Offence, being not a simple breach of trust, but a felony, punishable by imprisonment at hard labour under the act of 1835, and formerly, under the act of 1792, incurring the penalty of death. I beg you for such information, as to this case, as may show your impressions as to the grounds of suspicion, and the reasons that induce you to allow the individual to remain in the Mint. Under my obligation of "General supervision", I feel it my duty to ask a report from you as to this matter.

Very Respectfully Your faithful Servant.

(Signed) R. M. Patterson,

To. David Bradford Esq.
Supt. Br. Mint New-Orleans

"Director"

Copy

Doc. D.

107

U. S. B. Mint New-Orleans
May 13th 1839.

Hon. Levi Woodbury
Secy. of the Treasury of the U.S.

Sir,

"I have to express to you, with deep regret, that there is great dissatisfaction manifested by those persons who make deposites of bullion for coinage in this Branch Mint, and in the public generally, at the delays and disappointments attending

the operations of this institution. I have bestowed my utmost reflection on the causes of these delays and disappointments with a scrupulous regard to the relations subsisting between the other officers and myself, and I thought proper to communicate to you on the 27th ultº a copy of my reply to certain inquiries made me by the Director on the 1st of last month in respect to this public sentiment of dissatisfaction at the operations of this Branch Mint, to which I would now respectfully invite your attention. Since I made you that Communication other developments too numerous, and which I deem unnecessary to detail, have perfectly satisfied me that the expectations of the Government and the public in the attainment of the objects for which this Branch Mint was established, will continue to be disappointed, unless the officers to whose charge is committed at this time the Coining and the melting & Refining Departments be removed, and others devoted to the public interest and the fulfilment of their official duties be substituted in their place. — Whatever may be the motives of these officers in producing this public dissatisfaction, whether from aversion to the views of the Administration of the Government or otherwise, their Conduct is such as to be and actually is destructive of all harmony (leaving no hope of its being restored) between them and the other officers, and fatal to the true interests of the Institution. — I have therefore a painful official duty to perform — that of reporting

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to you, for the decision of the President, that Rufus Tyler, Coiner, and James Maxwell, Melter & Refiner in this Branch Mint, ought to be removed.

Should further details and proofs be required on this application I am prepared promptly to furnish them.

That the public service may not suffer by delay, in case the removals applied for be made, I am advised, at this time to Communicate to you the names of such persons as I would recommend for the appointments. I therefore, in such case, respectfully recommend, Mr. P. Denney, No. 530 Market St., Philadelphia, late foreman in the Coining department in this Br. Mint, for the appointment of Coiner, and Peter Edward Trastour, a native of France, and a naturalized Citizen of the United States for upwards of four years, of this City for the appointment of Melter & Refiner, in this Branch Mint. I name Mr. Denney with full confidence, as to his skill & Competency, and the circumstance of his having past last summer in this City and consequently being acclimated is an additional Motive of no light import. Edward H. Brown, also late in the Coining Department in this Br. Mint and previously thoroughly trained in the Mint at Philadelphia, is fully competent to carry on the business till the appointment might be filled satisfactorily. My knowledge of Mr. Brown is very limited; he may be fully worthy the appointment, but I am for more informed

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as respects Mr. Denny, which has induced me to name him. By the next mail, I will, I expect, have the honor to forward you satisfactory recommendations of the above named gentlemen. Before concluding I would observe that Mr. Trastour is a gentlemen of science and intimately acquainted with all the operations of the Mint, having had practical experience in France & Mexico and being naturalized and married in this City, I should consider him a great acquisition to the institution."

"Very Respectfully your humble servant
(Signed) David Bradford, - Supt."

(Copy) Doc. E.

Mint of the United States,
May 23d, 1839.

Sir,

Unhappy differences have existed, for some time between the officers of the Branch Mint at New-Orleans and have at length reached such a point as to affect the business of the Mint, and to require the interference of the Government.

The principal parties seem to be the superintendent and Assayer on the one side, and the Cashier and Melter & Refiner on the other. I send to you, enclosed, Copies of parts of my Correspondence, which will explain to you some of the subjects of difference, but a full

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and satisfory investigation of the matter can be made only on the spot.

From the letter of the Secretary of the Treasury of the 20th Instt, you will see that I am instructed to refer this investigation to you, and to engage you officially, "to enquire fully into the qualifications and efficiency of the present officers of the establish=ment, and of those recommended to succeed the Master & Refiner and Coiner in the event of their removal, and to report to me fully as to the characters of the Officers implicated and the State of the Branch Mint generally and its difficulties."

In making this investigation, I think it very desirable that the affair between the Melter & the Weigher should be closely inquired into, as well as the suspicious conduct of the door=Keeper while employed in counting coins. It is also important that the accounts should be examined, as it is asserted by Mr. Maxwell that he has not had a satisfactory settlement.

Your principal information will, of course be derived from the Officers themselves; but I will take the liberty of referring you also to Gen Martin Gordon, who was the Commissioner for the erection of the Mint buildings, takes great interest in its affairs, and enjoys the confidence of the Government. You will see the importance

of obtaining and communicating the desired information as early as possible.

I am, Sir, with Great respect Your
faithful Servant.
R. M. Patterson
Director

To. Thomas Sheidell Esq.
U. S. District Attorney, New-Orleans

(Copy)

"Treasury Department May 20 1839.

Sir,

I transmit enclosed a copy of a letter just received from the Superintendent of the Branch Mint at New-Orleans, to which I have to call your particular attention.

As further information seems to be required to enable the Department to come to a proper decision I have to request, that you will write to and employ the District Attorney at New-Orleans to enquire fully into the qualifications & efficiency of the present officers of the establishment and of those recommended to succeed the Melter & Refiner and Coiner in the event of their removal — and to report to you fully as to the Characters of the Officers implicated and the state of the Branch Mint generally, & its difficulties.

I remain very respy.

(Signed) Levi Woodbury
Secretary of the Treasury.

Dr. R. M. Patterson
Director of the Mint
Philadelphia

New Orleans June 4th

I certify the foregoing to be true copies of the documents exhibited by Thos Slidell Esq on the 3d inst. at the Branch Mint of the United States, in this city, & annexed to the proces-verbal of Investigation.

Horatio Davis